



## Research Article

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## Piano Players' Psychology of Public Performance

Yuanjie Jiang<sup>1</sup>, Kovit Kandasiri<sup>2</sup>

## ARTICLE INFO

## Name of Author:

1. Yuanjie Jiang  
Art Performance Communication,  
School of Liberal Arts, Shinawatra  
University, Thailand  
Email: [596346898@qq.com](mailto:596346898@qq.com)

## Corresponding Author:

2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kovit Kandasiri  
Art Performance Communication,  
School of Liberal Arts, Shinawatra  
University, Thailand  
Email: [kovit@siu.ac.th](mailto:kovit@siu.ac.th)

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## ABSTRACT

Among many piano players, whether they are piano masters or fledgling children, there will be different degrees of abnormal mentality and psychological obstacles in public performances such as grades, competitions, solo concerts and so on. and the crux of many problems is not the lack of performance skills, so the emergence of psychological investigation and research on the effect of piano performance. Therefore, it germinates the investigation and research on the psychology that affects the effect of piano performance.

This paper attempts to use the methods and theories of psychology from the perspective of music psychology, taking piano players as the research object, taking their influence on psychological problems in piano performance activities as the research content, and drawing lessons from the previous research results. follow the scientific road of discovering, analyzing and solving problems, hoping to provide a reference for piano players to solve psychological problems and improve the performance effect in piano performance.

## 1. Introduction

The study of piano playing psychology is the need of the development of the times and the need to solve many puzzles in the hearts of piano performers and piano performance educators. Specifically, there are three backgrounds as follows: Development needs of piano education and learning. For example, in real life, the lack of excellent piano teachers, the limitations of the selection of teaching materials, the narrow motivation of parents to learn piano, the phenomenon of weariness of piano children, and so on. For these social piano education phenomena, piano educators also try to analyze and solve the problems.

The contradictions in piano competitions intensified. The piano competitive performance has the strong purpose of losing or winning participation, the abnormal intensity of the intensity of the paly process, and the key factor that determines the success or failure of the performance is whether the piano performers can manage and control their emotions in the process of performance. to meet the challenge in the best state, that is, the level of psychological quality (Qian Zhang, 1992). To understand the reasons for the failure of piano performers, piano performance educators need to explore how to promote piano performers to improve their psychological quality through systematic and scientific teaching methods, to achieve better results. this also provides a new research direction for piano professional education.

The need of improving the level of higher education. In order to improve the employment rate of piano majors, colleges and universities should study a correct and scientific training method to improve the psychological quality of piano majors, which can directly improve their competitiveness. Strengthen the psychological training of piano majors and put it into daily training and competitive performances, to make them give full play to the best level and achieve good results in future performances and competitions. Based on the background of the above three aspects, this study attempts to analyze the factors that affect the psychology of piano performers through investigation and observation and puts forward measures to improve the psychology of piano performers and improve their psychological bearing capacity.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Current situation of Research in China

Mingming Liu made a comprehensive overview of the foreign research on music performance anxiety in the Foreign Research Review of Music performance anxiety published in 2007. In 2005, Cong Jiang published "Summary of Experimental Research on Music Performance Psychology" to introduce the development process, research progress and research results of music performance psychology at home and abroad.

This paper summarizes the research on music performance psychology in recent international music perception and cognition federation and music cognitive academic conference in Asia-Pacific region. (Cong Jiang, 2005) from the performance practice on the physiological wear and tear related problems, the performance of the psychological debugging of the analysis, but there is no real performance practice, psychological adjustment, as well as the surrounding environment for overall research. Generally, the domestic research on the influence mechanism of psychology on music performance has been involved, but there is little research on the specific methods for piano players to effectively solve the psychological problems and improve the performance quality.

## 2.2 Foreign research Status.

Kloppel (2009) discusses the physical and psychological basis of playing art, explains the role of the nervous system in music performance, introduces positive practice methods, and discusses how to overcome fear in concert.(kenny Dianna T. Driscoll, Tim, Ackermann & Bronwen J.2006)investigated the discomfort, performance ability, performance anxiety and workplace satisfaction of symphony orchestras and opera house performers, and explored a series of physical and mental health indicators of musicians in these different types of orchestras to determine whether the environment is a risk factor for music performance.(Lotze Martin,2013)describes in detail the kinesthetic images of the use of psychology, which makes a more positive and effective supplement to the performance of instrumental music.

From the foreign research literature, it is found that researchers pay high attention to the physical and mental health of performers. This paper hopes that through the study of performance psychology, we can study the performance psychology of piano players and what are the psychological factors that affect piano performance. It can guarantee the quality of piano performance.

## 3. Research Purpose

- 1) What is the influence of the performer's personal characteristics on the piano performance?
- 2) What is the influence of the performer's performance ability and experience on the piano performance?
- 3) What is the influence of objective factors such as teachers and others' opinions on the performance of pianists?
- 4) What effect does psychological factor have on piano player performance effect?

#### 4. Conceptual Framework

The dependent variable is the performance effect of piano players in piano performance, and there are multiple groups of independent variables :

The personal characteristics of piano players, including gender, identity, piano playing experience, character and so on.

Piano player's preparation and psychology before performance, including the repertoire style that he likes to play, the psychological understanding of piano performance, the willingness to participate in piano performance, the psychological state before piano performance, the preparation before piano performance, and the training before piano performance.

The performance of the piano player in the performance, including the level of piano performance, piano performance. Understanding of the tense factors affecting Piano performance, etc.

The psychology of the piano player after playing, including the behavior after the piano performance, the psychology after the piano performance, and the attribution psychology of the reasons for the failure of piano performance.

#### 5. Research Methodology

This study was conducted by questionnaire. Piano majors and piano educators from four units, namely, the School of Music of South China Normal University, the School of Xinghai Conservatory of Music, the School of Music of Guangzhou University and the Musicians Association of Guangdong Province were selected as the research objects. Due to the limitation of the researcher's ability, only the selection and arrangement method of projection technique was used to reduce the sensitivity of the questionnaire, to obtain the true and reliable answers of the subjects.

Therefore, in the actual questionnaire, we will decompose 5 questions in each of the three dimensions before, during and after the performance, a total of 15 single topics. The specific results are as follows: a total of 100 questionnaires were sent out and 91 valid questionnaires were recovered, accounting for 91% of the total.

### Psychological questionnaire affecting Piano performance

Dear Madam/Sir :

Hello!

This is an academic research questionnaire, which aims to explore the psychological factors that affect piano performance. Thank you very much for your kind assistance. the information you provide is very important for this study. The design of the topic is only to understand the actual situation, and there is no difference between right and wrong answers. Your first judgment on the question is the best answer. Look forward to filling in according to your point of view. All materials are for academic research only, fill in anonymously, and personal details will not be disclosed. Please rest assured to fill in.

Hope to get your support and cooperation. Best wishes for good health and happiness!

Question 1 What's your gender? [Single topic selection]

	Subtotal	Proportion
Male	22	24.18%
Female	69	75.82%
Valid number of fillers	91	

Question 2 Are you working or a student? [Single topic selection]

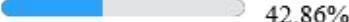
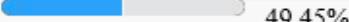
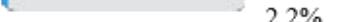
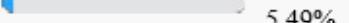
	Subtotal	Proportion
Working	31	34.07%
Student	60	65.93%
Valid number of fillers	91	

Question 3 What is your character (type)? [Single topic selection]

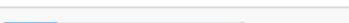
	Subtotal	Proportion
export-oriented	37	40.66%
Introverts	38	41.76%
Ego	16	17.58%
Valid number of fillers	91	

Question 4 How long have you been playing the piano? [Single topic selection]

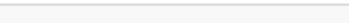
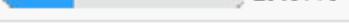
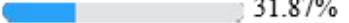
	Subtotal	Proportion
Within 2 years	47	51.65%
2-4 years	29	31.87%
5-10 years	7	7.69%
More than ten years	8	8.79%
Valid number of fillers	91	

Question 5 What kind of music do you like to play? [Single topic selection]		
	Subtotal	Proportion
Strong sense of rhythm and appeal	39	 42.86%
Slow pace, rich content	45	 49.45%
Unique style	2	 2.2%
Jazz, pop music	5	 5.49%
Valid number of fillers	91	

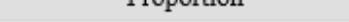
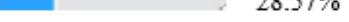
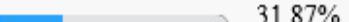
  

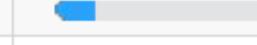
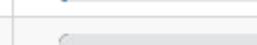
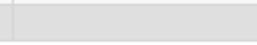
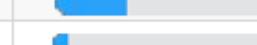
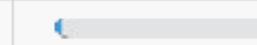
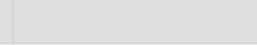
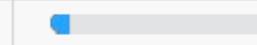
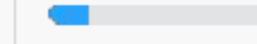
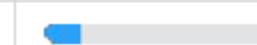
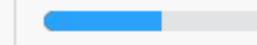
Question 6 Do you know the importance of psychological factors in piano performance? [Single topic selection]		
	Subtotal	Proportion
It is very important	68	 74.73%
The more important	21	 23.08%
General important	2	 2.22%
Is not important	0	 0%
Valid number of fillers	91	

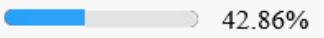
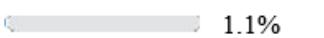
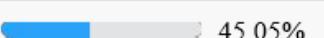
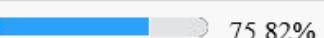
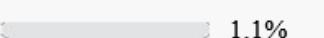
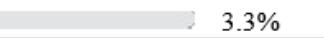
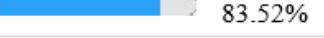
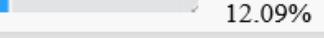
  

Question 7 How do you like to participate in piano performance? [Single topic selection]		
	Subtotal	Proportion
Very willing.	29	 31.87%
More willing	27	 29.67%
Generally willing	29	 31.87%
Don't want to	6	 6.59%
Valid number of fillers	91	

Question 8 The state of mind before the piano performance? [Single topic selection]		
	Subtotal	Proportion
I'd love to. Get ready	26	 28.57%
Focus on participation, accumulation of experience	29	 31.87%
Very nervous, very anxious, afraid of performance failure	36	 39.56%
If you fail, you will not participate in such activities again	0	 0%
Valid number of fillers	91	

Question 9 Preparation and psychological condition before piano performance. [Single topic selection]		
	Subtotal	Proportion
Practice and prepare	71	 78.02%
Can't practice meditation, low morale	15	 16.48%
Mental stress, affect physical health	5	 5.49%
Tried to quit several times	0	 0%
Valid number of fillers	91	
Question 10 The practice time before piano performance is? [Single topic selection]		
	Subtotal	Proportion
More than 2 hours	56	 61.54%
1 hour	27	 29.67%
0.5 hours	6	 6.59%
Don't practice	2	 2.2%
Valid number of fillers	91	
Question 11 The performance of a piano performer during a piano performance? [Single topic selection]		
	Subtotal	Proportion
Spectacular play	6	 6.59%
Normal play	40	 43.96%
Occasionally underperform	37	 40.66%
Often underperform	8	 8.79%
Valid number of fillers	91	
Question 12 The appearance of abnormal psychology during piano playing. [Single topic selection]		
	Subtotal	Proportion
Nervous and afraid, frequently drinking water to go to the toilet	17	 18.68%
Stiff limbs, abnormal mental manifestations	15	 16.48%
Forget the score	14	 15.38%
All of the above	45	 49.45%
Valid number of fillers	91	

Question 13 The main reason for the tension of piano performance is that? [Single topic selection]		
	Subtot	Proportion
Disappoint the expectation of family, teacher	10	 10.99%
Think oneself lack ability	39	 42.86%
You think your opponent is better than you	1	 1.1%
All of the above	41	 45.05%
Valid number of fillers	91	
Question 14 Psychological reflection and performance after piano performance. [Single topic selection]		
	Subtot	Proportion
Performance as usual	17	 18.68%
Feel a sense of relief	69	 75.82%
Sit on pins and needles	4	 4.4%
Negative and pessimistic	1	 1.1%
Valid number of fillers	91	
Question 15 Psychological feelings after a piano performance failure? [Single topic selection]		
	Subtot	Proportion
The rules are not scientific	3	 3.3%
Other participants are related customers.	1	 1.1%
Self-inadequacy	76	 83.52%
All of the above	11	 12.09%
Valid number of fillers	91	

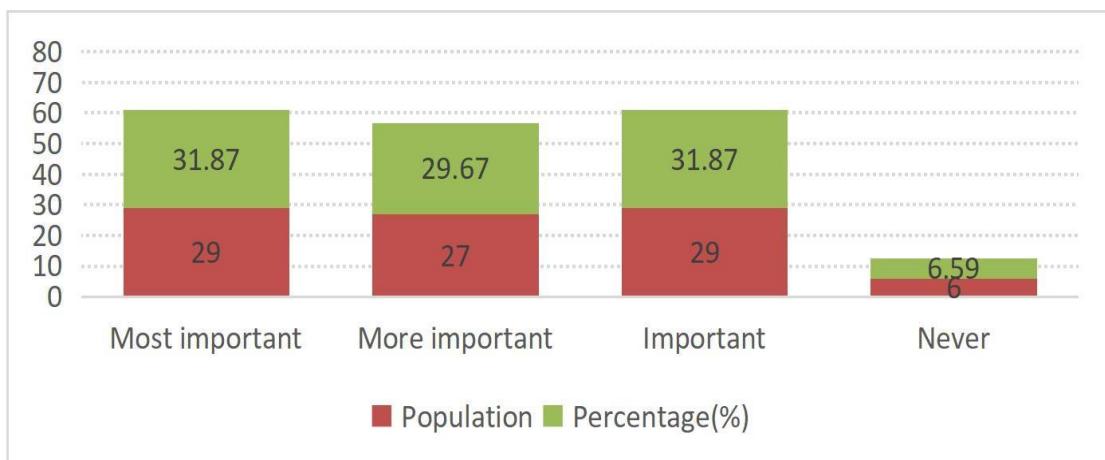
## 6. Result

### 1) Basic Characteristics of Interviewees

The gender of the interviewees: 22 males (24.18%) and 69 females (75.82%). Interviewees: 31 people have work experience, accounting for 34.07%; 60 piano students, accounting for 65.93%. Personality characteristics of the respondents: extroverted 37(40.66%) extroverted, like self-expression; 38(41.76%) introverted, like quiet, do not like self-expression maverick 16, accounting for 17.58%. Respondents engaged in piano playing time: 47 participants within 2 years, accounting for 51.65%; 29 (31.87%) in 2-4 years; There are 7 people with 5-10 years, accounting for 7.69%, and 8 people with more than 10 years, accounting for 8.79%. The preparation and psychological state of interviewees before piano performance.

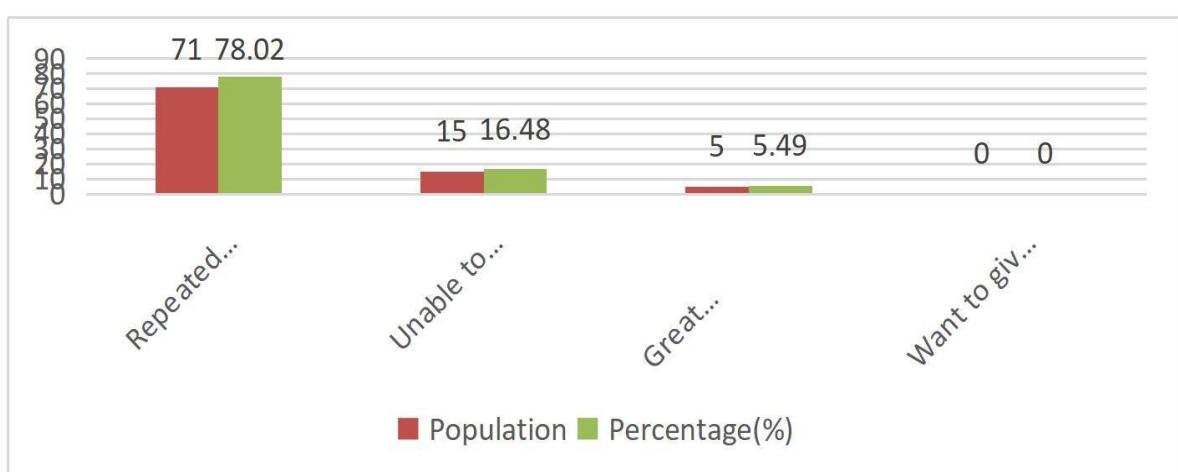
Respondents' willingness to participate in piano performance: 29 (31.87%) were very willing, 27 (29.67%) were more willing, 29 (31.87%) were generally willing, and 6 (6.59%) were unwilling.

**Table 1 Basic Characteristics of Interviewees**



Respondents' preparation and psychological condition before piano performance: 71 (78.02%) were fully prepared after repeated practice, 15 (16.48%) could not practice peacefully, 5 (5.49%) felt uncomfortable due to pressure, and none wanted to quit the competition for many times.

**Table 2 Respondents' preparation and psychological condition**

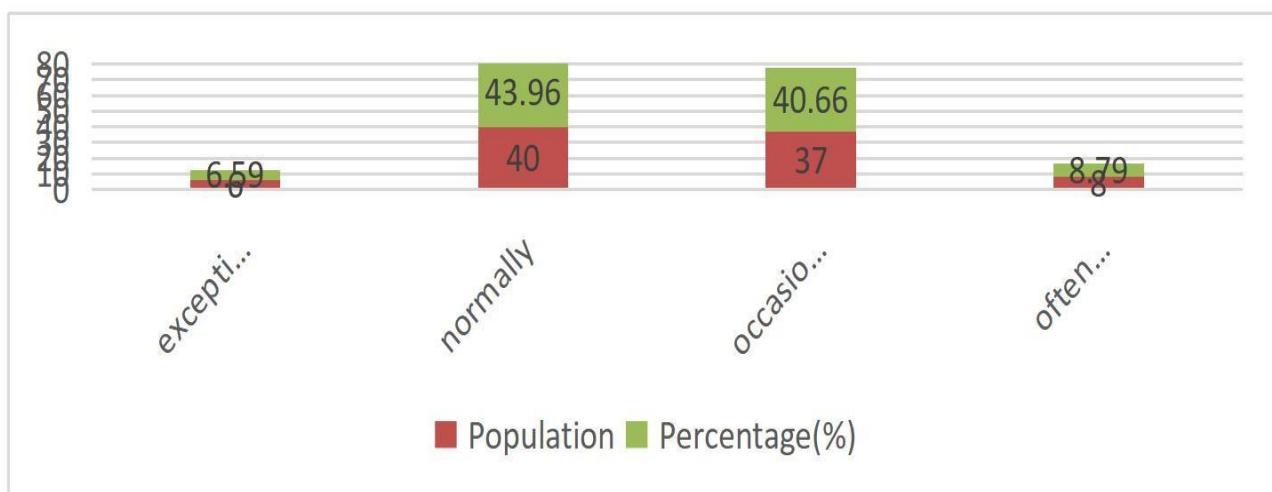


## 2) Performance and psychological state of interviewees in piano performance

The level of performance of the respondents in piano performances: 6 (6.59%) were

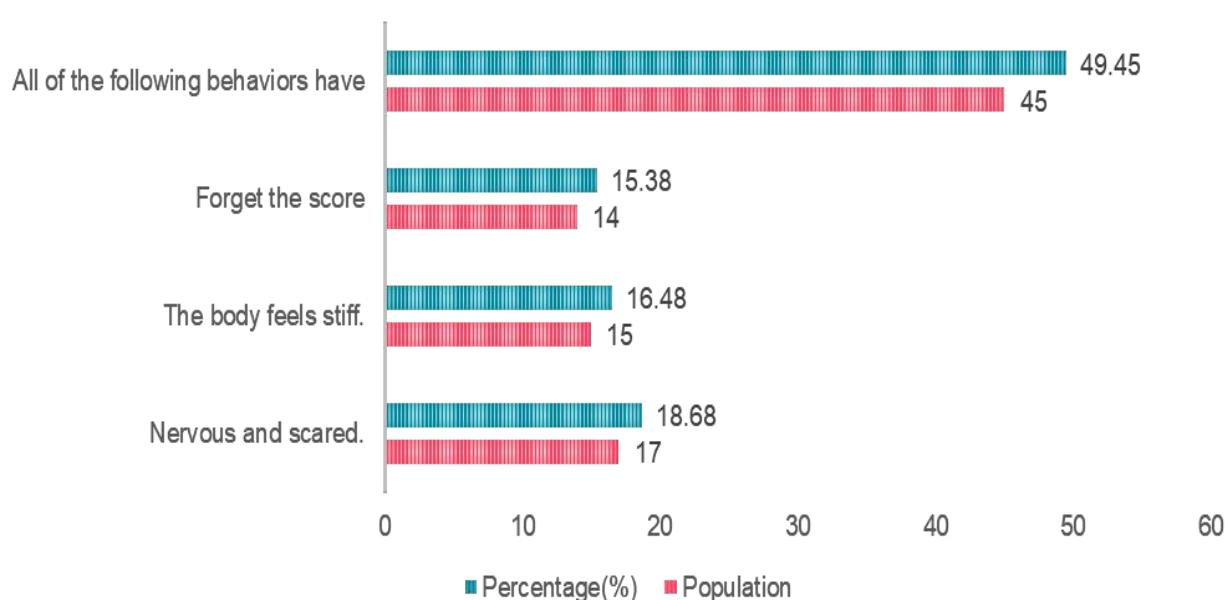
able to perform exceptionally, 40 (43.96%) were able to perform normally, 37 (40.66%) were occasionally abnormal, and 8 (8.79%) were often abnormal.

**Table 3 Performance and psychological state of interviewees in piano performance**



During the piano performance, the respondents showed abnormal psychological performance: 17 (18.68%) were nervous and afraid and drank water frequently, 15 (16.48%) were stiff, biting their lips and picking their fingers, and 14 (15.38%) forgot their music when performing on the stage. the brain is blank, accounting for 15.38%. There were 45 people with the above behaviors, accounting for 49.45%.

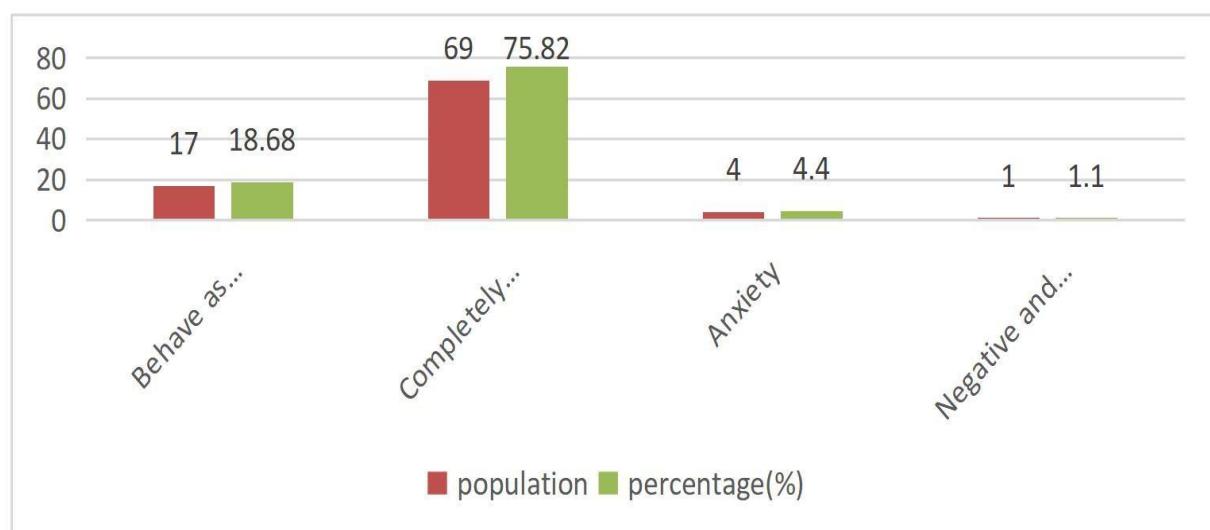
**Table 4 The respondents showed abnormal psychological performance:**



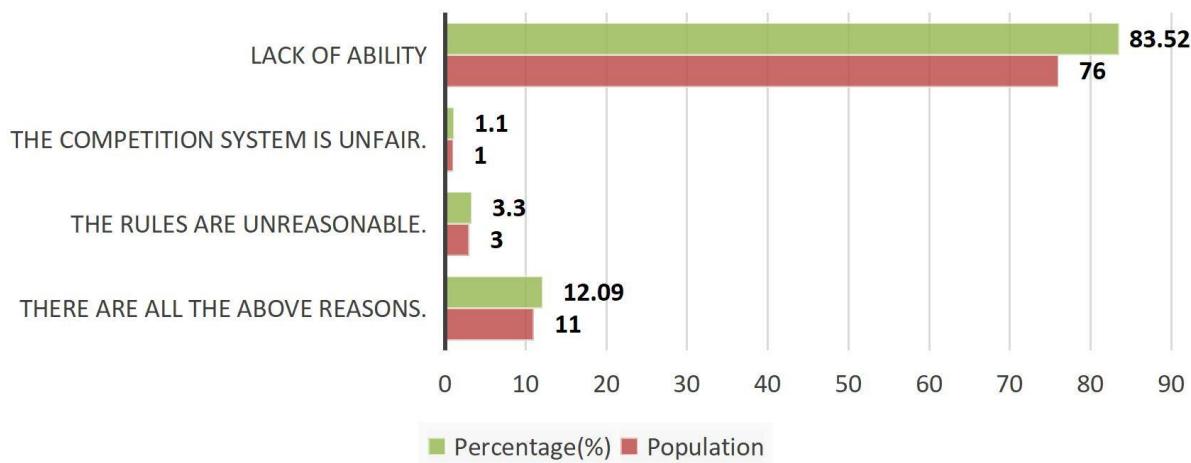
### 3) Psychological reflection and performance of Piano performers after Piano performance

The performance of the respondents after the piano performance: as usual, 17 people thought they should do what they should do, accounting for 18.68%; if they were relieved, 69 people planned to party with their friends, accounting for 75.82%; 4 people were still on pins and needles, accounting for 4.4%. 1 person who felt that the performance had failed, negative and pessimistic, had no face to others, accounted for 1.1%.

**Table 5 The performance of the respondents after the piano performance**



The psychological feelings of the respondents after the failure of piano performance: 3 (3.3%) thought that the competition rules were unscientific, 1 (1.1%) thought that other performers were related, 76 (83.52%) thought that they were incompetent and needed to continue their efforts, and 11 (12.09%) thought that all the above reasons were caused by the unscientific rules of the competition.

**Table 6 The psychological feelings of the respondents after the failure of piano performance**

**4) Personal characteristics are the factors that affect the quality of piano performance.** Due to the psychological characteristics of the players, such as personality differences, temperament differences, ability differences and so on, they tend to react differently to the same event. In piano performance, whether it is exams, competitions or solo concerts, you will often find this situation: Some performers are very skilled, expressive and contagious in practice, but they make mistakes due to anxiety when they perform in public, while others are in better shape than usual when playing in public. Such a different effect occurs because everyone's psychological tolerance is different, including the personality and temperament caused by family education, school education conditions and social environment.

**5) Objective attitude is the factor that affects the quality of piano performance.** In the public piano performance, the objective attitude is an important factor that causes the performer to be too nervous. Most performers can concentrate on playing in daily practice, but an objective attitude may make the performer pay too much attention to his or her personal image, ability and future, which will lead to low performance quality. Performers need to use subjective ideas to eliminate ideas that have nothing to do with the content of the performance, with a good state of mind and stable mood, in the usual practice to gain experience and experience, into subconscious and potential ability to support the ongoing performance activities.

**6) Skill practice is a factor affecting the quality of piano performance.** Mastering solid basic skills and comprehensive and skilled professional skills is an indispensable basis for reflecting music content and a prerequisite for ensuring the quality of performance. In the public performance, the lack of skill is an important factor for the performer to produce anxiety. Technical ability and playing psychology go hand in hand. Technology can help the performer convey the emotion of the musical works played to the audience. If there is no good technical ability, it will make the performer lack confidence in his own performance.

**7) Playing experience is the factor affecting the quality of piano performance.** "One minute on the stage, ten years off the stage", public performance has a one-time characteristic, which requires the performer to show the usual practice results creatively and perfectly. The performer should not only understand the ideological content of the music, take care of all the details of the music as much as possible, but also take care of the appreciation psychology of the audience, to bring the audience to the music with persuasive and infectious performance. Piano playing as the art of time. On-the-spot performance determines the success and failure of the performance. Players want to achieve a successful performance, so that the psychological state and the playing environment to maintain balance and coordination, in an effective time to adjust and control themselves. There are three basic links of music practice: creation-performance-appreciation. The function of music is mainly realized by exerting an imperceptible influence on the audience's psychology (Qian Zhang, 1992).

## 7. Discussion

The analysis of the performer's situation in the questionnaire from the perspective of psychology is the internal reflection caused by objective stimulation, which can be divided into two types.

**1) Positive Presence.** It shows moderate nervousness. This state is in line with the law of body and mind, is positive and normal, and is the necessary psychological state in piano performance. In terms of the characteristics of neural activity, the positive presence state is due to the neural excitation process adapted to the public performance activity in the performer's cerebral cortex (Cong Jiang, 2005). Has the ideal self-regulation ability, has the corresponding inhibition process to make it balance the result. This moderate tension is the most appropriate for the upcoming performance, is to help the performer focus,

emotional, energetic mobilization of their own various factors, full and accurate control of technology, put into the work to be played.

**2) Negative Presence.** The expression is excessive nervousness. This state leads to the emergence of superior centers of excitation in the cortex, which inhibits and prevents the reconnection of temporary connections previously made in the cortex. In this state of the performer, psychological imbalance, there will be the following two conditions: a. Excessive excitement and inadequate inhibition. This basically and performer because of objective stimulation cause cerebral cortex excited process excessive rise, restrain process abate, cause cerebral cortex to be opposite hypodermic center and plant sex nervous system adjust action abate concerned (Kloppel, 2009). Excessive excitement will lead to shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, restlessness, memory weakness, and even limb trembling. b. Over-excitement turns to over-inhibition. This is mainly related to the decrease of the excitation process of the player's cerebral cortex and the enhancement of the inhibition process. The reason for this situation is often that the performer practices the piano for too long before the performance, or the cerebral cortex activity fatigue caused by premature excitement, so that the corresponding cortical area from excitement advantage to inhibition advantage (Mingming Liu, 2017). Excessive suppression will lead to player depression, depression, physical decline, weakness of limbs, weakened perception and attention, lack of desire to play and other conditions.

Xinchun Li (2015) mention the two psychological conditions destroy the balance between the performer's psychological and physiological states, consist of this study found weaken the natural adjustment function of the human body, and hinder the flexibility of the human brain and the thinking of the mind, causing the performer to be unable to engage in the music performance normally. To sum up, a good psychological state is a very important problem in piano performance. Tension is inevitable when playing. The key problem is how to change and overcome this psychological state now and reduce its influence on the minimum.

## 8. Conclusion

Piano playing is a highly technical performing art that integrates mental skills and movement skills. In the whole dynamic process of piano public performance, human high-level nervous system is always involved and runs through complex psychological activities. At

present, there are many people engaged in piano performance in China. According to the survey, almost all of them have varying degrees of psychological problems in public performance, and their psychological states are also different. Through the questionnaire survey of piano playing psychology, using the theory of psychology, combined with the previous research results, this paper reveals the law of the performer's psychological state and the causes of the problems. then it is found that there are personal characteristics, objective attitude, technical training, stage experience four factors to analyze the factors affecting piano playing psychology and put forward the corresponding solutions.

A further understanding of music psychology, methods and applications will help to further popularize performance psychology in piano classroom teaching. Among the many piano players, there are few people who encounter and understand the theory of music psychology, even less about the classroom teaching theory of music psychology. Therefore, the author hopes that music colleges and non- professional music colleges can offer more courses about music psychology, so that the theory of music psychology can be popularized among college students.

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